



Communities Serving Schools Act

Introduced by Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV) and Rep. Tony Gonzales (R-TX)

The Need:

- Across the United States, we have seen significant constraints on education, health, and other government services, seriously impacting families' stability and students' well-being and growth, particularly as a result of the pandemic.
- Cuts to state and local programs have had profound negative impacts on the health, safety, and well-being of students across the country, making wraparound services that address out-of-school barriers to learning even more essential.
 - Unable to meet basic needs off school grounds, many students have seriously struggled in their academics, mental health, and physical health—not to mention in developing key life skills and preparing for college and careers.
- In 2020, Nevada faced a \$1.2-billion budget shortfall due to the pandemic, which led to large cuts for K-12 education and for health and human services programs, with significant negative impacts on the state's most vulnerable.
 - Some of the cuts limited class size reduction initiatives, Read by Grade 3, and teacher school supply reimbursements, as well as teacher incentives, like college and career readiness programs, school safety, and financial literacy.
 - There were also reductions for Nevada Medicaid recipients from the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), with significant implications for the hundreds of thousands of Medicaid recipients in the state.
- Nevada's most recent budget has restored funding to many of these key programs, and federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan has gone a long way in offering relief our schools, families, and students with limited resources.
- However, the well-being of Nevadan students is too important to leave up to ebbs and flows in state funding.
 - We need to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve their full potential, with reliable access to the supports and wraparound services they need and deserve.

What this Bill Does:

- The Communities Serving Schools Act would authorize \$1 billion in grants to be issued by the Secretary of Education for four-year periods to eligible state or local educational agencies for the provision of "wraparound services that address out-of-school factors that interfere with learning."
- Funds shall be used for:
 - (1) implementing a planning period to assess the needs of the school and select appropriate programs and services;
 - (2) partnering with a nonprofit community-based organization with a demonstrated record of providing high-quality, evidence-based wraparound services for children;

- (3) hiring an on-site coordinator who will align services with student needs, connect students to said services in an efficient manner, ensure integration of these services within the school, and track data on an annual basis.
- For the creation of this grant program, the bill calls for \$1 billion in funding, in line with what Congress allocates for 21st Century Community Learning Centers.
 - This funding level would allow for providing 25% of all Title I schools with \$100,000 each for a site coordinator.
- The Secretary of Education must also report to Congress every two years on the progress and impact of these grants and the work of grantees with respect to indicators, including attendance, graduation rates, academic progress, behavioral issues, and school engagement.
 - The bill also requires this information be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and income level.

Stakeholder Quotes:

- “Student success goes well beyond the classroom and the pandemic has reminded us of this fact in stark terms. To build a thriving education system, we must make sure every school serving the most under-resourced communities can provide not just high-quality learning but also the supports that enable students to succeed in school and in life, such as food security and mental health care. We ask Congress to pass the Communities Serving Schools Act as soon as possible. Introduced by Rep. Lee, it will establish a \$1 billion grant program to enable schools to invest in wrap-around services that will help us reimagine the way schools operate and show up for all students.”
 - *Rey Saldaña, National President and CEO of Communities In Schools*
- “Since the first introduction of the Communities Serving Schools Act, the urgency and need for wraparound and mental health supports has grown more pronounced with the pandemic’s prolonged impact on student learning and pressures on the economy. Congresswoman Lee is providing necessary leadership by sponsoring this bill, which will ensure our kids and families have what they need to succeed. Communities In Schools of Nevada thanks her — and we stand ready to partner on implementing this bill should it become law.”
 - *Tami Hance-Lehr, CEO & State Director for Communities In Schools of Nevada*
- “As an educator at Robert Taylor Elementary School, which is in Congresswoman Lee’s district, I know firsthand the difference that wraparound supports can make for the health, well-being, and academic success of our students. In fact, my son is enrolled in the Communities In Schools program receiving these necessary services. As an educator with my own financial struggles, I can relate to many of the issues the families I serve face. I appreciate Congresswoman Lee for understanding that our schools need more relief in these trying times.”
 - *Elsi Hernandez, Teacher at Robert Taylor Elementary School*

For more information or to cosponsor or endorse this bill, please contact:

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